Manhattan School of Music

STUDENT PROJECT

The Seven Shadows of Shakespeare

A multidisciplinary performance where Shakespeare's voices intertwine across a mosaic of musical worlds.

Emma Kristin Batchvarov (BM '28), Creator, Director, Mezzo-Soprano

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2026 | 7:30 PM
WILLIAM R. AND IRENE D. MILLER RECITAL HALL

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Seven Shadows of Shakespeare is a multidisciplinary performance which brings together theatre, opera, movement, and projection in an intimate duet that finally gives a voice to seven forgotten characters from William Shakespeare's body of work. These are the secondary figures who usually die in service of the protagonist's story, characters who effectively drive the drama but are rarely heard themselves.

Seven Shadows shifts the focus. Through powerful arias, personal monologues, and physical scenes, these shadow figures step into the spotlight. The performance explores the space between presence and absence, between voice and silence, and between those who write history and those who vanish from it. By placing these forgotten voices at the center, a contemporary reflection on power, representation, and the canon emerges. The performance consciously moves between disciplines; opera, spoken theatre, projection, dance, and live art/happening are not merely placed side by side but are interwoven into a single theatrical language. This cross-pollination breaks down traditional boundaries between art forms and creates various entry points for a diverse audience.

The meeting of classical vocal music and contemporary theatre gives rise to a new form of storytelling in which music and text constantly complement, question, and reinforce one another. The artistic dialogue between the creators—each with their background and expertise—forms the core of the project, resulting in a performance that is innovative in both musical and theatrical terms.

– Emma Kristin Batchvarov

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PROGRAM

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)	Prologue from *Romeo and Juliette* **Emma Kristin Batchvarov** (BM '28), Mezzo-Soprano
CHARLES GOUNOD (1818–1893)	"Ah! Je Veux Vivre" from *Romeo and Juliette* **Cecilia Soheily** (BM '28), Soprano **Michelle Ji** (BM '28), piano
SIDDHARTH RAGAVAN (b. 2006)	*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?* Sonnet 18 by William Shakespeare **Emma Kristin Batchvarov** (BM '28), Mezzo-Soprano **Cecilia Soheily** (BM '28), Soprano **Julianne Crossland** (BM '28), Soprano
GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685–1759)	"V'adoro pupille" from *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* **Julianne Crossland** (BM '28), Soprano **Michelle Ji** (BM '28), piano
GERALD FINZI (1901–1956)	*Come away death* **Daniel Wallace** (BM '29), Baritone **Michelle Ji** (BM '28), piano

IVANA NOA
(b. 2003)

Monologue
Inspired by William Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night"
Ivana Noa, Actor

EVAN BURROWS
(b. 2006)

Weird Sisters
Evan Furrow (BM '28), drums
Luke Bacani (MM '27), vibraphone
Ben Lerner (MM '27), saxophone
Robbie Nichols, bass
Jack Towse (MM '27), trumpet

LEONARD BERNSTEIN
(1918–1990)

Somewhere from *West Side Story*
Julianne Crossland (BM '28), Soprano
Michelle Ji (BM '28), piano

IVANA NOA
(b. 2003)

Monologue
After Desdemona's monologue from "Othello"
Ivana Noa, Actor
Maxime Moons, videography

GIUSEPPE VERDI
(1813–1901)

(Arr. Elias Valle)

"Ave Maria" from *Otello*

Emma Kristin Batchvarov (BM '28), Mezzo-Soprano
Cody Conley (BM '28), violin
Adrian Walker (BM '28), violin
August Schwob (BM '27), cello
Alex Hansen (BM '28), viola
Elias Valle (BM '28), piano

Prologue from *Romeo and Juliette*
William Shakespeare

Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows
Do with their death bury their parents' strife

"Ah! Je Veux Vivre" from *Romeo and Juliette*
Charles Gounod

Ah! Je veux vivre	Ah! I want to live
Dans ce rêve qui m'enivre;	In this dream that dreads me;
Ce jour encore,	This day again,
Douce flamme,	Sweet flame,
Je te garde dans mon âme	I keep you in my soul
Comme un trésor!	Like a treasure!
Cette ivresse	This intoxication
De jeunesse	Of youth
Ne dure, hélas! qu'un jour!	Do not last, alas! that one day!
Puis vient l'heure	Then comes the time
Où l'on pleure,	Where we cry,
Le cœur cède à l'amour,	The heart gives way to love,
Et le bonheur fuit sans retour.	And happiness flees without return.
Je veux vivre	I want to live, etc
Loin de l'hiver morose	Away from the gloomy winter
Laisse-moi sommeiller	Let me sleep
Et respirer la rose	And breathe the rose
Avant de l'effeuiller.	Before stripping it.
Ah! Douce flamme,	Ah! Sweet flame,
Reste dans mon âme	Stay in my soul
Comme un doux trésor	Like a sweet treasure
Longtemps encore!	Long time again!

Sonnet 18
By William Shakespeare

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date;
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
  So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
  So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Antony and Cleopatra, Act II, Scene II
("The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne")
William Shakespeare

Enobarbus: ...Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
Her infinite variety. Other women cloy
The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry
Where most she satisfies; for vilest things
Become themselves in her, that the holy priests
Bless her when she is riggish.

"V'adoro pupille" from *Giulio Cesare*
Georg Frideric Handel

V'adoro, pupille,	Your charming eyes,
saette d'amore,	My ravish'd Soul adores,
le vostre faville	The thrilling Pain
son grate nel sen.	My Heart with Pleasure bears;
Pietose vi brama	When you with Pity look,
il mesto mio core,	My Sorrows cease;
ch'ogn'ora vi chiama	For you alone
l'amato suo ben.	Can heal the Wounds you gave.

Come Away Death from William Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night"
Gerald Finzi

Come away, come away, death,
And in sad cypress let me be laid;
Fly away, fly away, breath;
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
O prepare it!
My part of death, no one so true
Did share it.
Not a flower, not a flower sweet,
On my black coffin let there be strown;
Not a friend, not a friend greet
My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown:
A thousand, thousand sighs to save,
Lay me, O where
Sad true lover never find my grave,
To weep there!

Monologue

(Inspired by William Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night")

Ivana Noa

Escape. Run. Flee. Fight. Don't stop. Run. Revenge. Go. Go. Go! Go! Run!

But I don't. It's time. I yield.

I fall into a soft bed of moss, it smells like rain and shadowed earth. As I lay, a small strip/beam of sunlight crawls towards my eyes. I'm blinded so I close my eyes and wait. I know when the shadow comes to steal the sun, I will be gone. I'll be invited to an eternity of nothing.

A white dove flies through a giant weeping willow. It wakes the willow, making the branches dance like an uncoordinated corps de ballet. And for one moment I wish that that white dove would lose its way. In the midst of the giant dancing branch maze it would take a wrong turn and crash into the giant center of wood.

It would fall, between the branches, taking a few sticks with it, the white feathers covered in dirt.

Fall like it flew too close to the sun. It would fall in my arms, I want to take care of it. It would lay in my hands, broken. I want to take care of it. People would crush it for less. And I would crush it for all if it meant I could escape and take it with me.

Imagine a world where we escape the ever changing maze.

At some point, it stops.

We stop.

Not because we give up, not because we are weak.

Imagine a world where it is possible to disappear without leaving. To follow light. To follow sound. To follow shadow.

Come away.

I am not afraid.

Let my breath fly away and let the earth bury me.

Do not scatter a single flower, Not even a sweet one.

Let no friend come to greet.

Let me live on in memory as I am now.

Monologue

(Inspired by William Shakespeare's "Otello")

Ivana Noa

...To be accused, by others. To be sentenced by other men.
To die by false accusations
To ask for forgiveness for crimes I did not commit.
To be accused of being unfaithful and fear my life because he will come at me at the same speed with which the storm comes through my windows. Let lightning struck me now and let my last memory of him not be his hands around my neck.
You told a lie, an odious, damned lie! Upon my soul, a lie, a wicked lie!
This time I will not hold my tongue. I am bound to speak
Here I kneel. If I ever violated his love, Either by something I said or by an actual action,
Or that my eyes, ears, or any sense, delighted themselves in any other person,
If I do not, never did, and never will
Why am I speaking so bluntly and recklessly?
I swear by every holy spirit that I've done everything I could to speak up, and I've put myself directly in the path of his anger because I spoke honestly.
I do not fear, I pray for the sinner, for the one who is innocent.
For the weak and the oppressed and for the mighty also wretched.
Show thy mercy. If it could not be spared for me
I pray for the one who bows his head under injustice and misfortune.
For us. Pray for us. Pray ever and in the hour of our death.
To not survive my own story once more.

"Ave Maria" from *Otello*
Giuseppe Verdi

Ave Maria, piena di grazia, eletta
Fra le spose e le vergini sei tu,
Sia benedetto il frutto, o benedetta,
Di tue materne viscere, Gesù.
Prega per chi adorando a te si prostra,
Prega nel peccator, per l'innocente,
E pel debole oppresso e pel possente,
Misero anch'esso, tua pietà dimostra.
Prega per chi sotto l'oltraggio piega
La fronte e sotto la malvagia sorte;
Per noi, per noi tu prega, prega
Sempre e nell'ora della morte nostra,
Prega per noi, prega per noi, prega.
Ave Maria . . .
Nell'ora della morte.
Ave!. . .Amen!

Hail Mary, full of grace, chosen one,
Among brides and virgins, you stand supreme;
Blessed be the fruit—O blessed one—
Of your maternal womb: Jesus.
Pray for those who bow before you in adoration;
Pray for the sinner and the innocent,
For the weak and oppressed, and for the mighty—
Who are wretched too—show them your mercy.
Pray for those who bow their heads
Beneath insult and cruel fate;
For us—pray for us—pray
Always, and at the hour of our death:
Pray for us, pray for us, pray.
Hail Mary...
At the hour of death.
Hail!... Amen!

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Emma Kristin Batchvarov (BM '28), Mezzo-Soprano

Emma Kristin is a Mezzo-soprano, currently pursuing her degree in vocal performance at Manhattan School of Music in New York, in the opera studio of Mary Dunleavy. In 2023/2024 she completed the Young Talents Program of the Royal Conservatoire Antwerp and attended the Sweelinck Academy of Conservatorium Amsterdam.

In 2021 Emma was chosen as a participant of Anna Maria Chiuri Masterclass.

At the age of 16 Emma Kristin performed the role of Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte* produced by TMF and Dutch National Opera & Ballet. She also performed in Wim Henderickx' contemporary opera *The Convert* for Opera Ballet Flanders. In 2024 Emma Kristin won First prize at Val Tidone International Music Competition. In 2025 she performed the role of Meg in *Little Women* (Adamo), presented by Trentino Music Festival Opera Studio, directed by Robin Blauers and conducted by J. David Jackson.

In 2026 Kristin was chosen as a participant of Sumi Jo Masterclass in Milano, Italy. The same year she also performed the role of Mercedes in Carmen for Chicago Summer Opera and Collegium Musicum New York.

In the period of 2018-2026 Emma Kristin performed in numerous concerts, films and staged productions in Belgium, Italy, The Netherlands and US, including Opera Ballet Flanders, Baruch Performing Arts Center, Kaufman Music Center, Neidorff-Karpati Hall, NY Flanders House, Casa Verdi, Kasteel De Merode, Château de Rixensart, DeSingel, Flagey, and Bozar.

Ceclia Soheily (BM '28), Soprano

A native of the east coast, Cecilia Soheily is an American soprano currently pursuing a Bachelors in Music (Class of 2028) at Manhattan School of Music, where she studies with esteemed soprano Joan Patenaude-Yarnell. She previously attended Pre-College at The Juilliard School (Class of 2024), where she studied with the reputable Lorraine Nubar. Cecilia is excited to be heading to Caltagirone, Sicily this summer to perform in Jack Li Vigni's Mediterranean Opera Studio & Festival. She will be making her role debut as Norina in *Don Pasquale*, as well as performing as a chorus member in their production of *Le nozze di Figaro*. Earlier this year, she was named a Finalist in the Schmidt Vocal Arts Undergraduate Competition. She later went on to receive a Schmidt Vocal Arts Alumni Summer Study Grant, which will be funding, in part, her

summer program tuition. Recently, she performed at the Kaufman Music Center as a soloist with the Manhattan School of Music Chamber Choir in their performance of Raphael Fusco's *American Requiem*. Last summer, Cecilia made her operatic debut as Nella in *Gianni Schicchi* and a chorus member in *L'elisir d'amore*. She has previously performed in opera scenes as Elisa (*Il rè pastore*), Norina (*Don Pasquale*), 2nd Mannequin (*Die stumme Serenade*), Elisetta (*Il matrimonio segreto*), Lucy (*Die Dreigroschenoper*), Poppea (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*), and Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*). In 2023, she received the First Place Regional Prize at the Schmidt Vocal Arts High School Competition. Aside from music, Cecilia enjoys an active life as a third degree black belt in Taekwondo.

Julianne Crossland (BM '28), Soprano

Julianne Crossland is a Soprano from the Bay Area California. With a professional choral background, she decided to go into classical voice after performing in vocal competitions such as the Schmidt. She is currently entering her third year at Manhattan School of Music where she has sung roles in multiple scene programs such as Ilia from *Idomeneo* and Despina from *Cosi fan tutte*. Julianne has also spent a summer in Colorado for Opera Theatre of the Rockies, where she learned and performed the role of Susanna in the majority of Act 2 from *Le nozze di Figaro*. Julianne is planning on studying over the summer in Verona with Opera Viva!

Daniel Wallace (BM '29), Baritone

Daniel is an emerging young artist and has a voice that has been described as "unparalleled for someone his age," and "possessing an advanced understanding of vocal technique." As a choral musician he is a Trinity Church Choral Scholar and is seen often performing with Trinity Church and will perform alongside of VOCES8 with the choral scholars. Daniel is also a vocal mentor with the National Children's Chorus and recently joined them in their spring concert at Carnegie Hall.

In the opera world Daniel made his debut as the Jailer in *Tosca* with New Jersey Lyric Opera and was seen this season with the Janiec Opera Company as the Doctor in *The Falling and the Rising*, and Bill Boatswain in *H.M.S Pinafore.* Daniel has received the National Young Arts Award with Distinction and was the runner up in New Jersey Light Opera's "Stars of Tomorrow" competition. He is currently a 2nd year student at Manhattan School of Music pursuing a Bachelor of Music degree.

Ivana Noa, Actor

Ivana Noa is a Belgian actor and theater maker with numerous stage, tv series and film credits. She has a Master's Degree in Drama from the Royal Conservatoire Antwerp (RCA) (‘25) and specialization in Meisner into Classical Texts from the Royal Academy for Dramatic Arts (RADA London) (‘26).

Michelle Ji (BM '28), Piano

Michelle Ji is a pianist who has performed a diverse repertoire of music to a variety of audiences throughout the United States and Europe. She has been recognized through honors such as the bronze prize in the open Bach category of SYMF and the silver prize in the American Protégé Romantic Music Competition. She recently appeared at Carnegie Hall, showcasing a performance of Brahms’s Rhapsody No. 1.

A lover of chamber music, Michelle finds immense joy in collaborative performances. Among her many cherished musical experiences was performing the Shostakovich Piano Quintet in G minor at Eastern Festival of Music, the Brahms Piano Quartet in G Minor at the InterHarmony International Music Festival, and the Schumann Piano Quintet in E-Flat Major at the Montecito International Music Festival. She values the collaborative process and bonding with her peers through music. Michelle also frequently collaborates with vocalists.

A California native, Michelle is a graduate of the California School of the Arts - San Gabriel Valley (CSArts-SGV), where she studied piano for six years. Michelle currently studies classical piano at Manhattan School of Music under the tutelage of Professor William Wolfram.

Siddharth Ragavan (BM ’28), Composer/Piano

Siddharth S. Ragavan is a composer, screen scorer, and multi-instrumentalist based in New York City. Across his wide range of musical practices, he displays an affinity for mode- and raga-influenced lyricism, unique timbral textures, and multitraditional rhythmic ideas. In addition to playing the cello and piano, he is a prolific performer on the Mridangam, a south Indian hand drum, to which he seeks to bring more awareness in the west’s wider music scene.

Siddharth is currently a student of Dr. J. Mark Stambaugh at the Manhattan School of Music where he is working towards his Bachelor’s degree in Composition.

Cody Conley (BM '28), Violin

Cody Conley is a 19 year old violinist currently studying in New York City. He has been fortunate to study with Mark Huggins, Shlomo Mintz, and Benjamin Beilman. He is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Music in the Zukerman Performance Program at Manhattan School of Music under the tutelage of Patinka Kopec and Pinchas Zukerman.

Cody has also attended and performed at several summer programs and festivals. These programs include Indiana University Jacobs School Summer String Academy, Curtis Institute Mentor Network, and Sunflower Music Festival. He has participated in masterclasses by Catherine Cho, David Kim, and Alexi Kenney. This summer, he attended the Heifetz Institute in the senior division.

Cody has competed as a soloist and chamber musician, winning the Pittsburgh Concert Society Young Artist Audition, the Philadelphia International Music Festival Concerto Competition, and the Fuchs Chamber Competition at the Manhattan School of Music. Other honors include prizes from the American Young Classical Musician, LISMA, Haslemere, Great Composers Best Wieniawski, and Music International Grand Prix competitions.

As a dedicated teacher, Cody maintains an active private violin and viola studio. In 2025, he served as a teaching assistant and chamber coach for the Philadelphia International Music Festival.

He has performed solo recitals in southern California and enjoys collaborating in chamber music. Sharing his music with diverse audiences at churches, senior living residences, and community outreach events remains a meaningful part of his musical journey. Cody is very grateful to perform on a 2017 Joseph Curtin violin and bows by F. Peccatte and J.B. Vuillaume.

Adrian Walker (BM '28), Violin

Adrian Walker is currently in his third year of a Bachelor of Music degree at Manhattan School of Music in Violin performance. He is in the studio of Peter Winograd for private instruction, and has studied with different professors for chamber music, including Nicholas Mann, Wolfram Koessel, and Eugene Drucker. Previously, he studied with Eugene Watanabe in Salt Lake City. He performed in quartets and as Concertmaster at the 2024 Fry Street Chamber Music Festival, also attending other festivals such as Sounding Point Academy for two summers, as well as Orford Music Festival. He performed as Concertmaster for the Waterford Chamber Orchestra Tour to the Czech Republic, Austria, Slovakia, and Hungary, where he was soloist for "Summer" from Vivaldi's *Four*

Seasons. He was Concertmaster and soloist for the Waterford Chamber Orchestra in the 2023 Intermezzo Chamber Music Series in Salt Lake City. In addition to playing the violin, Adrian is also an avid skier and climber. When not in school, he divides his time between Toronto and Salt Lake City.

August Schwob (BM '27), Cello

August Schwob, cellist, grew up in Oak Park, Illinois and started playing cello at the age of six. He is currently getting his bachelor's degree at the Manhattan School of Music where he studies with Philippe Muller. In the summer of 2024, August attended Domaine Forget where he participated in masterclasses taught by Anne Richardson, Caroline Stinson, and Bion Tsang. August has also participated in masterclasses with David Geringas of Blackmore Music Academy, Amir Eldan of the University of Michigan, Zlatomir Fung of The Juillard School, and violinist Peter Sheppard-Skaerved.

Alex Hansen (BM '28), Viola

Alex Hansen is a candidate for a B.M. in classical viola at Manhattan School of Music and is class of 2028. She currently studies under Shmuel Katz, assistant principal violist at the Metropolitan Opera. Previously she was a student of the award-winning composer and violist, Jessica Meyer. While in college, Alex has played under the baton of Leonard Slatkin, Mei-Ann Chen, Keith Lockhart, JoAnn Falletta, Ken Lam, Andrew Grams, Rob Kapilow, Earl Lee, and more. She has also played in masterclasses for Ettore Causa from Yale School of Music and Lise Berthaud from Haute école de musique de Genève. During her time at Manhattan School of Music, she has been coached in chamber music by Eugene Drucker of the Emerson String Quartet and was under the guidance of former American String Quartet cellist, David Geber. Her string quartet was a winner of MSM's Lillian Fuchs Chamber Music Competition in December of 2025. This academic year, her chamber group is being coached by Peter Winnograd, also a founding member of the American String Quartet.

In the summer of 2025, Alex attended Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival and was coached by Ann Marie Brink from DePaul University. She received private lessons as well from Nardo Poy, member of Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and Timothy Deighton. This past summer 2026, she was at Brevard Music Center summer program in North Carolina, and studied with Dr. Catharine Carroll Lees, professor at Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. Alex started playing the viola at the age of eight, taking private lessons and playing in school. Outside of music, she enjoys reading classic books, trying different food, and running.

Elias Valle (BM '28), Piano

Elias Valle is a composer and multi-instrumentalist based in New York City. His music is focused on processes of natural and reactive progression and explores the line between systematic ideas and expressive flow. His recent projects take inspiration from the organic and the primeval and contain aesthetically diverse sound-worlds.

Elias' music has recently been performed or recorded by ensembles including loadbang, Norfolk Contemporary Ensemble, Decoda Chamber Orchestra, New York Youth Symphony, Semiosis Quartet, members of Nu Deco Ensemble, members of Tactus Ensemble, the California School for the Arts Wind Ensemble, and performers including Lisa Moore, Wilson Poffenberger, Maya Proulx, and more.

His music and performance abilities have been recognized by organizations and competitions including MTNA, Tribeca New Music, the Young Composers Challenge, and he was named a Winner with Distinction in the National YoungArts Competition 2025. In 2026, he was featured on WXQR's *Young Artist Showcase* series. He has also had the privilege of working with influential minds including Pulitzer Prize winner Aaron Jay Kernis, Grammy winner Pascal Le Boeuf, and Martin Bresnick.

Elias is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Composition at the Manhattan School of Music where he studies with Reiko Fueting.

Evan Furrow (BM '28), Drums

Drummer Evan Furrow, a rising talent from Eugene, Oregon, has always been ahead of his years. By 15, he had already made his mark in Eugene and Portland, often the youngest musician on stage. Now 19, he's in New York, studying at Manhattan School of Music.

Furrow started playing drums at 12 and began gigging and performing by 14 around town, his momentum briefly halted by the pandemic. But in that stillness, he studied with jazz greats Dan Weiss and Ari Hoenig, sharpening his craft. When the world reopened, he returned stronger, playing alongside local greats and internationally renowned artists such as George Colligan.

Currently, Furrow is working to develop further as a musician and artist in New York's turbulent Jazz scene.

Luke Bacani (MM '27), Vibraphone

New York City based musician Luke Bacani has grown to become a creative and awe-inspiring vibraphonist, composer, arranger, and percussionist. Luke is currently pursuing a Masters of Music from Manhattan School of Music (where he also attained his Bachelor of Music in 2025). In conjunction with performing at prolific venues such as Dizzy's Jazz Club, Nublu, Sound of Brazil, ShapeShifter Lab, and WKCR, Luke also released his debut album of original compositions entitled *Who Knows if You Can Even Understand Yourself?* in 2026.

Ben Lerner (MM '27), Alto Saxophone

Ben is an outstanding young artist who has quickly established himself as an emerging voice in Jazz and on the Alto Saxophone. Growing up in New Zealand, Ben relocated to Sydney in 2020, where he played with the likes of of Mike Nock, Matt McMahon, Laurence Pike, Andrew Gander, Steve Barry, Jonathan Crayford, and received accolades such as being a finalist in the National Jazz Awards, and the Ernest Heine Family Foundation Scholarship. With his quartet, Ben toured Australia and New Zealand several times, and recorded an album for ABC Jazz Australia (unreleased). Ben was the founder and curator of Monday Night Confessions, the primary outlet for original jazz and improvised music in Sydney. He relocated to New York City in mid-2025 where he is further establishing himself as an emerging artist on the global stage, performing regularly at venues such as Close Up, Ornithology, and Bar Bayeux.

Robbie Nichols, Bass

Robert Nicols is a bassist and composer based out of New York. He graduated from The New School in 2024 where he studied with jazz legends such as Buster Williams and Thomas Morgan. Robert is currently working on his master's degree at Manhattan School of Music. He performs regularly as a sideman in New York with many different groups playing in many different genres such as jazz, funk, hip-hop, and pop. Robert primarily operates within the jazz idiom but deeply values a musical experience that blurs the line between genres. He has performed at venues across New York including Cafe Ornithology, Nublu, Elsewhere, Brooklyn Made, and The Django. He has also performed at the International Jazz Fest in Bern, Switzerland. Robert's compositions are inspired by film score, modern classical, and the jazz tradition. He strives to create music that is exploratory, sensitive, and dynamic. His influences include John Coltrane, Ryuichi Sakamoto, Paul Chambers, Aphex Twin, and Ambrose Akinmusire.

Jack Towse (MM '27), Trumpet

Jack Towse is a 23 year-old trumpet player, composer, and educator from New York. He has his undergraduate degree from the Juilliard School and is currently completing his graduate degree at the Manhattan School of Music, where he studies with Ingrid Jensen and Jon Faddis. He has subbed on two off Broadway shows, performed with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, and was a member of the Gutenberg Jazz Collective in 2023/24.

ADDITIONAL CREDITS

Ramon Tenefrancia, Student Projects Manager

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ABOUT MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Founded as a community music school by Janet Daniels Schenck in 1918, today MSM is recognized for its more than 1,000 superbly talented undergraduate and graduate students who come from more than 50 countries and nearly all 50 states; its innovative curricula and world-renowned artist-teacher faculty that includes musicians from the New York Philharmonic, the Met Orchestra, and the top ranks of the jazz and Broadway communities; and a distinguished community of accomplished, award-winning alumni working at the highest levels of the musical, educational, cultural, and professional worlds.

The School is dedicated to the personal, artistic, and intellectual development of aspiring musicians, from its Precollege students through those pursuing doctoral studies. Offering classical, jazz, and musical theatre training, MSM grants a range of undergraduate and graduate degrees. True to MSM's origins as a music school for children, the Precollege Division is a professionally oriented Saturday music program dedicated to the musical and personal growth of talented young musicians ages 8 to 18. The School also serves some 2,000 New York City schoolchildren through its Arts-in-Education Program, and another 2,000 students through its critically acclaimed Distance Learning Program.

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Contact the Philanthropy Office at **917-493-4434** or to make an online gift, **scan this code** or visit **msmnyc.edu/givenow**.

Land Acknowledgment

We want to acknowledge that we gather as Manhattan School of Music on the traditional land of the Lenape and Wappinger past and present, and honor with gratitude the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations. This calls us to commit to continuing to learn how to be better stewards of the land we inhabit as well.


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